

A
SERMON
OF
Contentment.

By T. F. a Minister of Gods Word.

Phillip. 4. 11.

*I have learned in whatsoever state I
am therewith to be content.*



L O N D O N.

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TO THE
HONORABLE

and truly noble

Sr. JOHN D'ANVERS

Knight.

Sir,

THis smal Ser-
mon may well
bee termed

Zoar, for is it not a
little one? Yet it
bears good proportion
to the short text; on
which it discourseth;

A 2 little

The Epistle

little auditory for
which it was compo-
sed, and your private
Chappel wherein it was
delivered. As it is
smal, so it desired to be
secret, and intended
no appearance in pub-
like. Good was the
counsel which I assh
gave you. Amariah.
2 Cro 25:19. Abide
now at home, especi-
ally in our dangerous
dayes, when all go-
ing,

Dedictory.

ing, is censurable for
gadding abroad with-
out a necessary voca-
tion.

But seeing such
was your importunitie,
to have it Printed,
that all my excuses to
the contrary, which I
could alledge with
truth, and the delays,
which I could make
with manners, might
not prevaile: I have
chosen rather to be ac-
counted

The Epistle

counted undiscreeet
then uncivil, and have
yeelded to your desire.
Surely Sir, Heaven
can never return a de-
nial to your requests
whom I presume, (by
proportion of your ear-
nest desiring so smal a
matter) to be zealous
in your desires of hie
concernment, that no-
thing but a grant can
give you satisfaction.

But the mainest
motive,

Dedicatory.

*motive, next your im-
portunity, which put
me on this publike ad-
venture, was the con-
sideration of my en-
gagements to your no-
ble bounty, above my
possibility of deserving
it. The Apostle ~~with~~
it is part of the duty of
a good servant, Tit. 2.
v. 9. $\mu\eta\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\iota\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\omicron\upsilon\tau\alpha\varsigma$, not
answering againe. I
must confesse my selfe
your Servant, and
therefore*

The Epistle, &c.
therefore it ill be-
seemed me to dislike or
mutter against any
thing you was pleased
I should doe. Thus de-
siring the continuance
and increase of all spi-
ritual and temporal
happines on your ho-
nour. I commend you
to the Almighty.

T. F.



1 TIM. 6. 6.

*But godlinesse with content-
ment is great gain.*



IN the foregoing
verse, St. Paul
sets down the
worldlings prayer, creed,
and commandements;
which is their daily de-
sire, believe and practise,
and all contained in three
words; *Gain is Godlines.*
Now in my text St. Paul
counter-mine their opi-
nion

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nion, or raiseth our antiposition to batter down their false conceit, most elegantly crossing and inverting their words;
But Godlines with contentment is great gain.

- II. Take notice of the unaffected elegancy of the Apostle, how clearly and naturally with a little addition, he turns the worldlings Paradox into a Christian truth. Though Sermons may not laugh with light expressions: yet it is not unlawfull for them to smile with delightfull language: Always

of Contentment.

wayes provided, that the
sweetnesse of the lawce
spoile not the savouri-
nesse of the meat. *The* Ecclef.
Preacher sought to finde out 12. 10.
acceptable or pleasant words,
that so his sound matter
might be more welcome
to his auditors.

Well, here wee have
two contrary opinions
set on foot together, *Gain* III.
is godlinesse, saith the
worldling, whose Gold
is his god, looking and
telling thereof, his saying
of his prayers. *Godlinesse*
is great gain, saith God him-
selfe, by the mouth of the
Apo.

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Acts 4: Apostle. Now as Peter
in another case, whether
it be right to hearken un-
to man more then unto
God, judge ycc.

IV.

The text presents us
with a *Bride*.

2 *A Bride-maide.*

3 *Her great portion.*

4 *The present payment
thereof.*

1 *The Bride. Godlinesse.*
We need not enquire fur-
ther into her Pedegree
and extraction, she car-
ries her Father in her
Name, and relates to
God the Author thereof.

1. ✈

2. The

of Contentment.

2. *The Bride-maid.* The Virgin her companion that follows her, or her inseparable attendant, Contentment. *Godlinesse with contentment.*

3 *Her great Portion,* Wherein observe the rich ware, Gain; The large measure, Great gain.

4 *The present payment.* Not in expectances or reversiones; but down on the naile, presently deposited, is. *Godlines with contentment is great gain.*

Wee begin with the Bride, and in the first place let us put it to the question.

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question. What godlines is? To which quere, severall answers will be made according to mens severall affections. Aske some Fryer observant, What godlines is, and he will tel you, the wearing of ashirt of hair, girdle of hemp, fasting so often in the week, praying so often in the day with such like Canonical devotions. Ask the tenacious mainrainer of some new upstart opinion, what godlines is? And he will answer, It is the zealous defending with limb and life

of Contentment.

life of such, and such
strangetenets, which our
fathers perchance never
hard of before; yea which
is worse, such a person
wil presume soto confine
Godlines to his opinion,
as to ungodly all others
who in the least particu-
lar dissent from him. Oh,
if God should have no
more mercy on us, then
wee have charity one to
another, what would
become of us? Indeed
Christ rearmeth his own
a little flock, *Fear not little*
flock. But if some mens
rash and cruel censures
should

Luk. 12,
32.

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should be true, the number of the godly would be so little, it would not be a flock.

5 It is a true but sad consideration how in all ages, men with more vehemency of spirit have stickled about small and unimportant points then about such matters as most concern their salvation. So that I may say (these sorrowfull times having tuned all our tongues to military phrases) some men have lavished more powder and shot in the defence of

of Contentment.

of some sleight out-works which might well have been quitted without any losse to Religion, then in maintaing the main platform of piety, and making good that Castle of Gods service and their own salvation. Pride wil be found upon serious enquiry the principall cause hereof. For when men have studied many weeks, moneths or years about some additionall point in Divinity, they contend to have the same essentiall to salvation, because it is essentiall

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A Sermon.

to their reputation, least otherwise their discretion be called into question, for taking so much pains in vain, and spending so much precious time about a needlesse matter. Hereupon they labour to inhance the value of their own studies, and will have all those mynes gold, which they have discovered; yea, all their superstructures must be accounted fundamentall: All their far fetcht deductions and consequential results must be reputed to be immediate

of Contentment.

mediate and essentiall to
godlines; yea, the very
life of godlines must be
placed in the zealous as-
serting the same.

6 But it will be the sa-
fest way for us to take a
description of godlinesse
from a pen infallible, im-
partiall, and unconcer-
ned in our modern di-
stractions. Even from
Saint James himself. *Pure* James 1.
religion (or godlinesse) and ^{27.}
undefiled before God and the
Father is this, to visite the fa-
therlesse and widdows in their
affliction, and to keep himself
unspotea from the world. This

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setteth forth the practi-
call part of Religion, and,
as I may term it, the heat
of godlinesse. To which
if the speculative part, the
light of Godlinesse bee
added, *to know the only true*

John 17.
3.

*God, and Iesus Christ whom he
hath sent*, then godlines is
made compleat. And
godlinesse thus defined
admits of a latitude, so
that it may consist with
some errours in judge-
ment, and infirmities in
practise; Provided that
the godly person persists
in Faith, Hope and Cha-
rity, which hold out the
summe

of Contentment.

summe of Religion as to
the necessary part there-
of. As for all particular
forms of Church Go-
vernment, Ceremonies
and outward manner
of divine worship, most
of them admitting of al-
teration upon emergen-
cies, and variation accor-
ding to circumstances of
time, place, and persons,
(though these be more or
lesse ornamentall to god-
linesse, as they neerer or
further off relate to di-
vine institution) yet it is
erronious to fixe or
place the life or essence

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Act. 10. of godlinesse therein.
34. Wee conclude this point
with the words of Saint
Peter. Of a truth I perceive
that God is no respecter of per-
sons; But in every nation, he
that feareth him and worketh
righteousnes is accepted with
him: Yea, in one and the
same nation, he that fear-
eth him and worketh
righteousnesse of what
Sect, Side, Party, Profes-
sion, Opinion, Church,
Congregation soever he
be is accepted with him,
as having true godlines
in his heart which with con-
stantment is great gain.

7 Come

of Contentment.

7 Come we now to the Brid-maid attending her, *Contentment*. Contentment is a willing submission of ours to Gods will in all conditions. I say willing; for, if it be patience perforce, *What reward have you? What doe you more then others? Doe not even the Publicans and Sinners the same?* Yea, what doe you more then Mules and Horses which being kept with Bit and Bridle quietly carry their ryders which they cannot cast off; In all conditions, patient in adversity,

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humble in prosperity,
thankfull in both; looking
neither above our
estates with the ambitious
man to have it higher;
nor beyond it, with the
covetous man to
spread it broader; nor
besides it with the envious
man, repynning at
the estate of others; but
directly on the Portion
God hath given us, and
fully satisfied with the
same. Even justifying
Gods proceedings unto
us, though wee receive
from him what flesh &
blood would count hard

mea-

of Contentment.

measure, namely, if his
Divine wisdom should
so appoint it, *That with* Eccles. 7.
just men we perish with our ^{15.}
righteousnesse, whilst wicked
men prolong their lives in their
wickednes.

8 Here we must take
notice of the conjuncti-
on copulative, *with*. God-
lines with contentment.
Which furnisheth us
with two profitable ob-
servations,

1. Wheresoever there
is true godlinesse
there is content-
ment.

2. Wheresoever there
is

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is true contentment there is godlines.

²Sam. 23 Like *Saul* and *Jonathan*,
lovely and pleasant in their lives
and in their deaths they are not
divided. These twin graces
alwayes go together;
True it is, that Gods children
may often have their fits and
qualms of
¹Kin. 19 discontentment, as *Eliab*
⁴Jonah 4.1 and *Jonah* had : But this
proceeds from the imperfections
of grace in them; They are not
discontented as they are
godly, but as they have a
principle of ungodlinesse
in

of Contentment.

in them the remnant of
carnall corruption.

9 On the other side,
no wicked man what-
soever he pretendeth, can
have true contentment.

Remarkable it is that
in the same chapter wee
finde two brethren lay-
ing claim to the grace of
contentation, but on dif-
ferent; yea, contrary ti-
tles.

*Esau said, Gen. 33. 9. I
have enough my brother, keep
that thou hast unto thy self. Ja-
cob said, Gen. 33. 11. God
hath dealt graciously with mee
because I have enough. Now*

Esau's

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Esau's enough was indeed not *enough*, being onely a proud and vain-glorious brag, scorning and disdainning at the first (till importunity altered him) to receive a gift from his younger Brother, as if it were a disgrace and disparagement to his greatness to admit of any addition or accession of his estate from his inferior. *Jacobs enough* was a true and reall acknowledgement of Gods goodnesse to him, resting satisfied with that portion divine providence

of Contentment.

dence had allotted him,
such contentment al-
waies goes with godlines,
and is great gain.

10 Come we now to
the Dowery; and before
we descend to the parti-
culars thereof, take no-
tice in generall of Gods
bountifull dealing with
his servants. God might
command us to work
and give us no wages,
and most justly enioyne
usto labour all day in his
Vineyard, and give us no
penny at night; Very
good reason. Why should
we expect to receive
profit

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profit by him, who re-
turn no profit to him.

*Luke 17.
10.* *When yee have done all those
things which are commanded
you : say, Wee are unprofi-
table servants, wee have done
that which was our duty to doe;
Saul did not give but take*

*1 Sam. 18
25.* *a dowry with his
daughter, and it is obser-
vable that 100 of fore-
skins onely were requi-
red of David, but he gave
200 for her. Such was
the super-errogation of
his valour; love and loy-
alty especially when joy-
ned together, never give
scant measure. God in
like*

of Contentment.

like manner might expect that wee should give him a portion for the attaining of godlines; All wee can doe all wee can suffer is too little to purchase so precious a grace. Yet see the goodnes of God, who knowing he is to deale with such dull workmen, who will take pains no longer then they are paid, whets us on with reward in his service.

11 Here I deny not but it is lawfull to look on those blessings and benefits which God reacheth

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eth out to us for his service; Moses *himself* had respect unto the recompence of reward. But two things we must take heed of; First that wee receive this reward in notion and nature of a meere gratuity, not exactly merited by the condignity of our performances, and onely due unto us by the vertue of Gods free promise and not our deserts. Secondly, that as we look on the reward, so wee look through and beyond it. It being a good Inn for our desires to bait

Hebr. 11.
26.

of Contentment.

bait at, but a bad home
for them to lodge in;
Let us labour to deuest
our souls of mercenary
thoughts, and learn to
serve god for himselfe;
Active was the affection
of Sechem to Dinah, as ap-
pears by his request to Gen. 34.
11, 12.
Jacob and his sonnes. Let
*me finde grace in your eyes, and
what yee shall say unto mee, I
will give. Ask me never so
much dowry and gift, and I
will give according as yee shall
say unto me: But give me the
Damosel to wife. Oh, that
our hearts were but
wrought to this holy*
C rem-

A Sermon

temper, that we should desire godlinesse on any terms, undergo any hardship, though there were neither Hell to punish, nor Heaven to reward. However great is Gods goodnes, who knowing whereof wee are made, and remembring that we are but dust, is pleased to spurre us on in the race of piety with a reward propounded, godlines with contentment is great gain.

12 So much in generall, That there is a Dowry; Now in particular

of Contentment.

cular what is the dowry
of godlinesse. It is great
gain.

Great gain, of what? Let *Object.*
Saint Paul himself, who
wrote this Epistle tell us,
when he cast up his au-
dit, what profit he got by
the profession of Piety.

In labours more abundant, in
stripes above measure, in prisons *2 Cor. 11*
more frequent, in deaths often. *23.*

Where is the gain, all this
while? Perchance it fol-
lows, We will try ano-
ther verse. In journeying of-
ten, in perils of waters, in perils *Ver. 26.*
of Robbers, in perils by mine
own Country-men, in perils by

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the Heathen, in perils in the
City, in perils in the Wildernes,
in perils in the Sea, in perils a-
mongst false brethren. Where
is the gain all this while?
you will say, these were
but the Apostles adven-
tures, his rich return
(slow but sure) will
come at last. Once more
we will try. In wearinesse,
Y. 27. and painfulnessse, in watchings
often, in hunger and thirst, in
fastings often, in cold and na-
kednesse. The further we
go, the lesse gain we find.
Cushai said unto David,
2 Sam. May all the Enemies of
my Lord the King be as
the

of Contentment.

the young man *Abſalom* is.
But if this be gain, May
all the enemies of God
and goodnes have plenty
thereof. It will never
ſink into a worldlings
head that godlineſſe is
gain, whileſt the gran-
dees of piety are found ſo
poore, *Eliab* begging food
of a Widdow, *Peter* with-
out gold or ſilver; Our
Saviour himſelf not ha-
ving where to lay his
head.

It is confeſt that the *Anſw.*
doctrine in the text, can
in no wiſe be made good
according to the princi-
ples

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ples of flesh and blood.

Our Saviour said unto

John 18.
36.

Pilate, My kingdome is not of this world. So the sense and interpretation of my text is not of this world, is not carnall but spiritual, not temporal but eternal. This will plainly appear, if these two particulars be well weighed.

1 What the world counts gain, is losse,

2 What the world counts losse is gaine.

What the world counts gain is losse. For *what will it profit a man if he win the whole world, and loose his*
his

of Contentment.

his own soule. Most poore
is the condition of those
who have plenty of
worldly wealth, and are
not rich towards God; Coun- Luk. 12.
try people having a peice 27.
of light gold use to fill
the Indentures thereof
with dirt, so to make it
the heavier; But wisemen
wil not take dirt for gold
in payment. It seems in
like manner that wicked
men being sensible that
they want waight in the
scales of the sanctuary,
(*Tekel thou art waighed in the* Dan. 5.
ballance and found too light 27.)
of set purpose load them

C 4 elves

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Hab. 2. 6 selves with *thick clay*. But all will not make them currant in Gods sight, for

Prov. 11. *riches availe not in the day of*

4.

Wrath. They are long in getting with much pains, hard in keeping with much care, quick in loosing with more sorrow.

Wherefore as the Apostle mentions *Science falsely so called*, so this is gain falsely so called by men,

1 Tim. 6.
20.

13 Secondly, They nicke-name that losse which is gain in very deed, such were all those sanctified afflictions which Saint Paul suffered.

of Contentment.

ed. It is confest that,
thornes and thistles had
never grown in the
world, had *Adam* stood in
his integrity, yet some
of them since mans fall
cannot well be wanted;
Holy thistle (we know)
hath a Sovereign vertue,
and sweet bryer hath a
pleasant scent. All tribu-
lations are thorns to
flesh and blood (the
word imports as much)
yet as Sanctified to Gods
children in Christ they
become of excellent use,
increasing their grace
here and glory hereafter;
Lynnen

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• Lynnen new washt
though it may dry more
by day time, is observed
to whiten more in a fair
night; Adversity sanctifi-
ed to a Christian soule
doth more improve the
same in purity and piety,
then the constant enjoy-
ing of a prosperous con-
dition.

14 But we need goe
no further for the proof
of the great profit gotten
by Gods service, then to
the words of the Apo-
stle. *Godlinesse hath the pro-
mise of the life which now is,
and of that which is to come.*

1 Tim. 4.
8.

It

of Contentment.

It is reported of *Alexander*, that having conquered the World, he wept because there was no more left for his valour to overcome: But least Gods children should have any cause of discontentment, that their joy may have room enough to dilate it self in, see a life and a life, a vworld and a vworld, one here and another hereafter, one in possession, another in reversion allotted unto them.

15 Come we now to the present payment, *is*,
Even at this present instant,

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stant, God hath done great things for us already, whereof we rejoyce. Excellent is the expression of the Apostle.

1 Cor. 3. 22. Or things present, or things to come, All are yours. Here

some carping curious Criticks may challenge St. Paul of impropriety of language; yea, finde both false Grammar and Logick in his words, false Tense, to say future things are, false Logick, for how can things to come be ours, which be not, But know St. Paul spake with languages more then them all, and had no need to learn the

1 Cor. 14
18.

con-

of Contentment.

congruity of construction from any other. It is good in law to say, This reversion is mine because the reversioner is in present possession of the right to it, though not of the profit by it; yea, heaven on earth is actually ours already; the possession of a clear conscience, and the spirit of adoption signs and seals unto us the favour of God, then which, no greater gain.

16 And now as the Eunuch said to Philip, *See here is water, what doth binder me to be baptized,* so say I. Act. 8. 36
Behold

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Behold, here is a Bride,
Godlines, ready provided;
A bride-maid, *Contentment*,
ready prepared. The
great portion presently
to be paid. What hin-
ders now but the mar-
riage may instantly pro-
ceed, that so we may be
wedded and bedded to-
gether. But what an-
swered Philip to the Eu-
nuch? *If thou believest with*
all thine heart, thou maiest be
baptised. So say I. If thou
lovest this Bride with all
thy Soule, counting no-
thing too dear to obtain
her, the marriages solem-
nities

Acts 8.
37.

of Contentment.

nitics may instantly goe on. Oh that I had persuasive eloquence effectually to advance this match, the best is, what is wanting in mee the spokesman, is plentifully supplied in her the bride.

17. But two things we must beware of. Take heed you mistake not the shadow for the substance, the picture for the person. Saint *Paul* tels us of some, who have the forme of godlinesse, but deny the power thereof. ^{2 Tim.}
^{3. 5.} The Poets tels us of many

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ny who at first were suiters to *Penelope* the Mistresse, but at last were married to the Maids which attended her. It is to be feared that many who pretend to love godlinesse it self, fall at last a courting and wooing of the forme, the meer outside and garb of Religion, and content themselves with the same: wherein an hypocrite may equally, yea exceed the sincerest Saint and servant of God.

Lastly, Beware least thy covetous heart rather

of Contentment.

ther love the Portion
then the Person, have
more minde to the gaine
then the godlines. We
finde how the next kins-
man was very ready to
redeem the parcel of *Naomies* land which was his
brother *Elimelechs*. But as
soon as withall he heard,
hee must take *Ruth* to Ruth. 4.
6.
wife, he fell back from
his promise and purpose;
Many there be which are
very forward to wed the
gain, but are utterly un-
willing to have the god-
lines with it. Such a sui-
ter was *Balaam* himselfe:

D

O

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Num.
23.10.

O that I might see the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his, who was carelesse to live the life of the righteous. But let us labour to have the substance and sincerity of Piety in our hearts, knowing that we are to deale with such a God who prefers a dramme of integrity before a pound of profession; And if wee acquit our selves upright in his presence, godlinesse with contentment is great gain unto us. I say godlinesse in generall not restrictively

of Contentment.

strictively ingrossed to
some particular party,
but extended according
to the dimension of cha-
rity to all persons agree-
ing in the essentials to sal-
vation; *In my fathers house*
there be many Mansions, as ^{Joh. 14. 2}
if God had provided se-
verall repositories of hap-
pinesse for such as differ
in smaller opinions,
vvhilest all agreeing in
generall godlinesse, may
meet in one grand Hea-
ven and place of eternall
Felicity,

Amen.